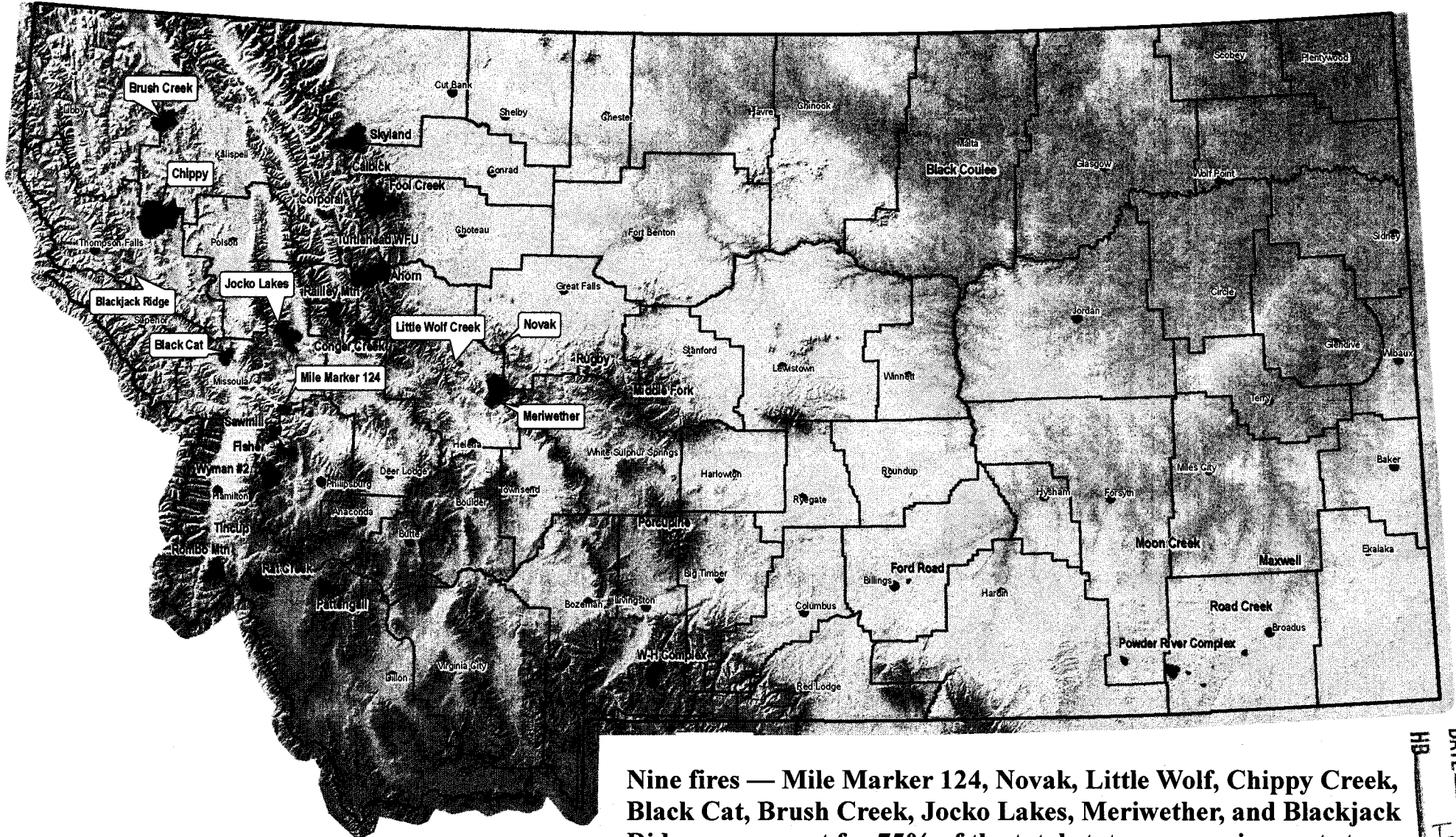


# 2007 MONTANA LARGE FIRES



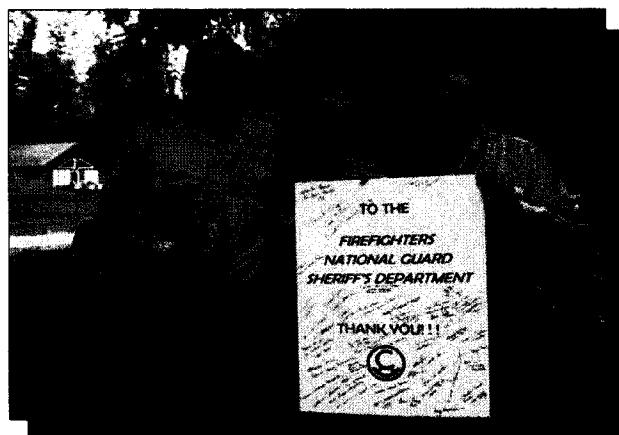
Nine fires — Mile Marker 124, Novak, Little Wolf, Chippy Creek, Black Cat, Brush Creek, Jocko Lakes, Meriwether, and Blackjack Ridge — account for 75% of the total state suppression costs to date. A 2007 DNRC report stresses the importance of initial attack in reducing fire suppression costs, noting that average costs for a small fire (<10 acres) is \$4,070, while the average costs for large fires (>5000 acres) is \$2.5 Million.

EXHIBIT 9-4-07  
DATE 9-4-07  
HB H31

[illegible]

2007 FIRE SEASON FIRE COSTS		
YEAR	ACRES	STATE COSTS
2000	1,160,145	\$55 MILLION*
2001	146,819	\$13 MILLION
2003	736,809	\$35 MILLION**
2006	1,047,323	\$37 MILLION
2007	759,096 (as of 8/30/07)	\$40 MILLION (Projected)

\* Statewide FEMA Declaration Reimbursement \*\* Jobs & Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act Funds



*Well deserved thanks to firefighters, law enforcement, and the Montana National Guard on the Sawmill Complex*

*The Montana DNRC extends its gratitude to all who offered assistance during the 2007 fire season. Help came to Montana from as far away as Ontario, Canada, Florida, California, and many points in between. To the contractors, local firefighters, community leaders, law enforcement, federal and state agencies, pilots, smokejumpers, hotshots, hand crews and everyone else who offered their assistance: our sincerest thanks for all of your efforts.*

## Long Term Solutions to Mitigating Fire Costs

There are some things that can be done to take a proactive approach to mitigating the costs of fire suppression in the long term.

- ♦ Continued investment in DNRC'S Initial Attack capabilities, including use of severity resources during extreme fire danger.
- ♦ Active forest management and restoration activities to improve forest health and reduce hazardous fuels.
- ♦ Support for DNRC'S County Cooperative Fire Program, federal Volunteer and Rural Fire Assistance, and other programs whose aim is to ensure that local fire organizations have the equipment and resources necessary.
- ♦ Continued public education about homeowner responsibility that comes with living in the wildland-urban interface, as well as financial assistance and incentives for private landowners to create defensible space.

*"The extent of hazardous fuel treatments that you have on private lands in this area is not common. We did not see a single home in the Stage 1 and 2 evacuation areas that we felt we could not defend"*

*~Joe Molhoek, Tin Cup Fire  
Deputy Incident Cmdr.*



# Major Themes of the 2007 Fire Season

## EXTREME FIRE DANGER

Many fires have been resistant to control, despite rapid dispatch of initial attack resources.

### EXAMPLE: JOCKO LAKES FIRE MISSOULA COUNTY

The Jocko Lakes fire ignited Friday, August 3, 2007, and burned about 300 acres before heavy winds the next day pushed the fire eight miles to the southwest. Spot fires propelled the blaze forward a mile and a half or more at a time, much too fast for firefighters to catch.

Roughly 650 homes were evacuated, sending 1500 Seeley Lake area resident and visitors out of the community.

For firefighters, the conditions and behavior of the fire was like nothing they had ever seen before. Yet, most fear that these firestorms will become increasingly common given Montana's deepening drought, record high temperatures in the summer, and an overabundance of forest fuels.



Night Ops, Jocko Lakes Fire

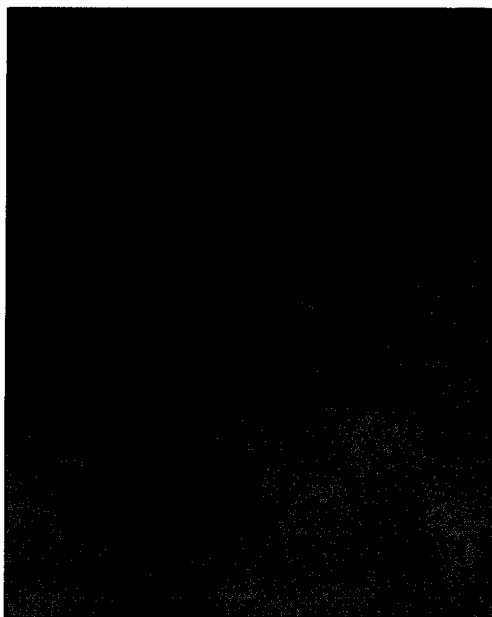
## INITIAL ATTACK

Safe and aggressive initial attack done in cooperation with federal, state and local partners is the key to protecting Montana lives and property, while minimizing costs to taxpayers.

### EXAMPLE: GRAINGER FIRE LAKE COUNTY

*"The Grainger Fire near Marion was caught at 4 acres thanks to response of two severity dozers, the Montana National Guard Blackhawk helicopter, DNRC helicopter, 2 single-engine air tankers and numerous engines. This fire had a lot of potential in timber and grass fuels to be a large fire if not for the additional resources."*

*~Dan Cassidy, DNRC*



## COOPERATION

DNRC works in concert with a vast network of partners to suppress fires around the state. Our success depends upon collaboration between federal and state agencies, tribes, local government and private contractors.

### EXAMPLE: COX ROAD FIRE GALLATIN COUNTY

When the Cox Road Fire started the evening of July 23rd, Central Valley Fire Department called the DNRC to request Mutual Aid assistance, and DNRC responded with a state helicopter for initial attack, as well as a 20-person crew and engine for mop-up the next day. The fire was held to 620 acres and put in patrol status one day after it was reported.



Working a hot spot

## WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE

Development in the wildland urban interface is one of the most critical element challenging firefighters throughout the West.

### EXAMPLE: FORD FIRE YELLOWSTONE COUNTY

In 2006 the Emerald Hills Fire burned 3,863 acres, destroying one home and damaging others. In 2007, fire returned to Emerald Hills, as the Ford Fire burned 804 acres and destroyed 2 homes. In both cases, the losses would have been even greater if not for the well-coordinated response by firefighters and close proximity of air resources. This illustrates the continued and recurring risk to homeowners in the wildland urban interface.



Ford Fire Photo by Billings Gazette

For fires occurring on DNRC direct protection from 1996-2006, large fires in the WUI cost at average of 46% more to suppress than non-WUI fires.